

~ 1987 ~

"I pushed my paintbrush to conjure a new world, while this world is slowly washed away."

I've been listening to the brand new 2016 remaster of 'Skylarking' by XTC. Sounding phenomenal in hi def on bluray, with a delectable plethora of extras, giving the full monty!

Great album, produced by our hero of wizardry: Todd Rundgren. [who Brian and I saw perform fantastically at Wolfgangs in North Beach that January, launching the year of great concerts!]



By all accounts, the band XTC—especially songwriter Andy Partridge—clashed with TR's controlling and sarcastic personality, but who admittedly produced and arranged the album brilliantly.

I love it, it's a whole world unto itself.

And the year I bought the LP was in early 1987. Triggering that year of change and development.

It was 30 years ago, and my first full year in California. The transition made helpful by family support! I was living with Brian, and then with Dad and Mom and Brian for the next year and a half while attending art college.

Not a good year for producing any good artwork, but the practice later in my first semester paved the way to a prolific future.

January we were in the pyramid shaped temporary rental house that Bri scored an unusual deal via a bank awaiting foreclosure. It was a unique monstrosity of a labyrinth, that gave a huge heating bill.

Mom and Dad were the ones on the lookout for the next rental.

I was planning on moving to San Francisco where I belonged. But how with no substantial income? [Bemoaning not being able to afford to see runs of Grateful Dead shows that winter season, with Jerry back after his diabetic coma]

I perused the rental ads and became disillusioned by the idea of moving in with roommates I did not know. I was young, only 23, poor and fairly intimidated by the prospect.

Responding to a few ads, I almost took a room in the lower Haight, but got cold feet about how tough that 'hood was back then.

I almost regret not trying that out. One potential place was on Haight down the block from Divisadero in a classic Victorian. The guy seemed a bit oddly detached and strung out, but was cool having me move in. [probably for \$200 a month at the time]

I opted to go along with the family, mainly for lack of good finance, but also fear of moving into a strange situation.

[friends I had made later on, who moved to SF around that same time, have their tales of awkward living situations at first]

I had not worked since May in Minneapolis, before I went to Europe for the summer. Brian started me working that February doing home remodeling on the house of the family The Tools. Lots of grunt work and refinement work for a big job. Brian got us busy, and the Construct Builders projects were full time all the way through the end of summer.

Meanwhile, my parents found a house all the way out in Concord. A total suburb deep into Contra Costa county, which I dreaded. This was going in the wrong direction! I was hoping they'd be closer to the Bay or Ocean. Part of their choice was accessibility for Brian to his area of clientele. Also, my sister Jill had recently moved near there in Pleasant Hill with her then husband Mitch and their kids Casey, Jesse and Lauren.

What my young mind did not grasp was the need for my retired parents to have stable, predictable creature comforts that suburbia provided.

I was a young culture vulture...and suburbia was culturally barren to me, providing a certain amount of unbelonging.

Regardless of my discontent with Concord..it was advantageous for my segue to college and city life to come.

I tried to spend my free time exploring SF, Berkeley and Marin. All areas I would prefer to live in.

My desire resulted in a drive of great discoveries...from the navigating of San Francisco's most interesting streets, shops in Berkeley (including Triple Rock brewpub!), to magnificent trails in Marin county.

Often I would take my bike on BART and ride from the stops to my destinations and back. Returning late at night. I got used to riding up Clayton road after dark.

*"Season cycle moving round and round
Pushing life up from a cold dead ground
It's growing green"*

It was considered one of the drought years in CA, with little proportionate rainfall. This did make construction and bike riding easier, though Brian and I did have to race out in wee small hours a few times to tarp an open roof of a house we'd be working on.

The work was not easy, but I did learn a lot about how houses go together, and many difficulties with estimating time. Brian knew a ton of techniques and was considered a DIY Renaissance contractor..but even the best hit walls of unexpected pitfalls. Such as discovering more foundation to demolish, needing more work, trash hauls, dumpster fees..etc. Money would be lost over these kind of obstacles, so we were busy working, getting by but not flush.

Bri took on a few more large home remodels and we became busier. By summer was when sister Joni joined our small family team to help with the chores and have a summer job while around temporarily before working as a ski instructor at Royal Gorge by winter, then going back to college. We still have laughs over the discomforts of removing old insulation in 99 degree heat!

With 4 jobs going at once that summer we were working full time.

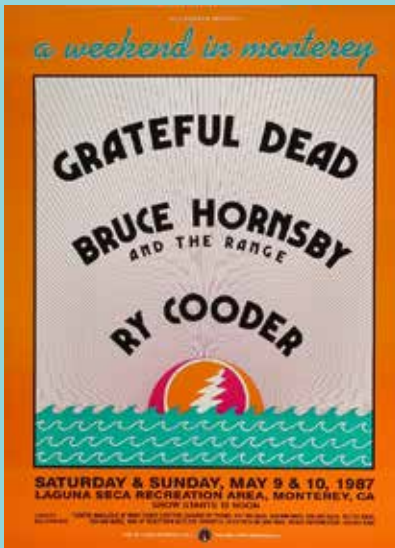
Good memorable times along the way would have to be highlighted by the Grateful Dead shows that summer! Beginning with Laguna Seca in the Spring. Brian and I went to the May 9th show. I could not wait—so eager to catch my favorite American band after I had not for a long break.

Brian had traded work on a Lafayette house for a very cool red convertible 1974 British Jensen Healy.

We took that over the bay bridge that morning, through the SF fog, and down highway 1 for a terrific coastal drive down through Monterey, and over the hills to the Laguna Seca raceway. Beautiful!

The road to the show was a Deadhead caravan of decked out psychedelic vehicles, friendly faces, colorful clothes, and Dead recordings blasting from car stereoes. A blissful CA scene, slowed down by parking—or lack thereof—we had to park on that road with many others, and walk a half mile to the show.

Brian brought beers—Altbayerisch Dünkel—on a German beer kick that year. That tasted good on our walk to the show. (I still have the bottle cap)



Walking into the show area, we were unfortunately too late to hear Ry Cooder open. The sunny scene of deadheads was a welcome blast of California freakdom. I was loving soaking it all in, while Bruce Hornsby was playing, whose music I did not know yet, but was impressed by his fluid piano work amongst the hills and sky.

The sun is shining warmly, Brian and I were up the hill a ways with an overview of the concert scenery of golden hills with tie dyed freaks. Right here I met a friendly tape trader Tim, who was there from Calgary. We exchanged addresses and mailing of exquisite Dead tapes followed in weeks. (he sent my first tape of 2/13/70!)

The band gets on and starts with the perfectly appropriate 'Sugar Magnolia'! I had to get much closer, while Bri stayed up the hill. I enjoyed the show in the maelstrom! All the way to the closer of Sunshine daydream, making this show a Sugar Mag sandwich!

Egadz I was home!! Couldn't wait for more GD shows, with Greeks, Oakland Stadium with Dylan, Angels Camp, Shoreline, and Kaiser ahead. A major highlight of that year was the energetic renewal of Jerry Garcia, with the band firing on new cylinders. My era of attending most local shows began, now that I was truly a California resident in the bay area.

Back to May 9th. the show ended, with an encore of Iko Iko. The sun lowering with fog rolling in, Brian and I head back to the car, drive back through Monterey in the darkening fog, and the car stops.

Argh. these Jensen Heals have a reputation for breaking down, so what to do.

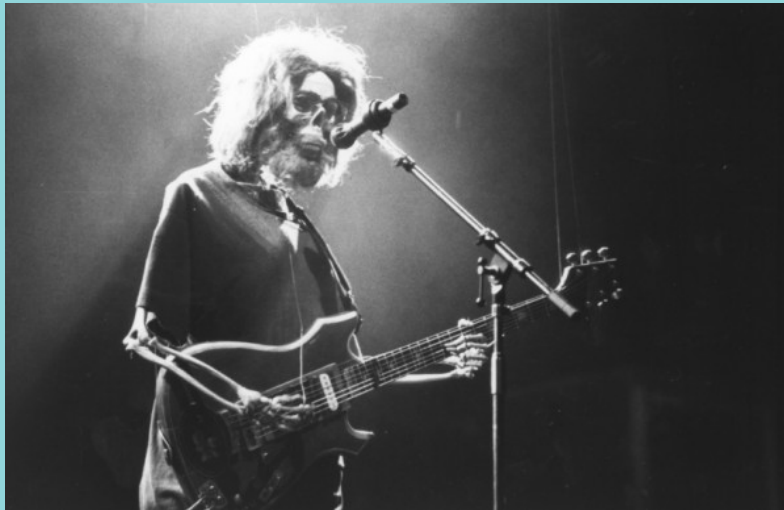
Bri works on troubleshooting and it was not working. So the solution was

to call bro-in-law and fun larger than life character Mitch, who reliably zoomed out from Pleasant Hill to get us while we waited in a pizzeria. [He may have taken Brians white work van]

Late he arrives, and it's a drag to be stuck but we manage to have lots of laughs with Mitch there, and plenty of pizza.

[meanwhile, unbeknownst to us at the time, the GD were making their Touch of Grey video at the concert site, giving a free mini-show to those camping for day two. argh!]

Brian had to return the next day to tow the Jensen back to Concord. Which was a major expense and a pain.



Back to summertime, and one of my main goals in moving to CA, was being accepted into the Academy of Art College. I first looked into CCAC in Oakland, but opted for SF. I liked the central urban location, plus it was more affordable. I needed financial assistance, and got approved for student loans and Pell grants! YES! Moving my year into gear! My MCAD records were sufficiently good enough for my acceptance.

*"Insect bomber Buddhist droning
Copper chord of August's organ
Please don't heed my shout, I'm relax in the undertow"*

Before then amongst the construction work, was some visitor fun to be had. First, good friend Jamie came out for an early August visit, with a great Yosemite camping trip included!

Awe inspiring, and during the drought the falls were down to a trickle. So one of our hikes was up to Yosemite falls, up top in the 95 degree heat. A steep incline and hard work. Still acclimating to mountain trails. Something I would charge up zealously for years following.

At the top was a pool of water, that was usually untouchably under rapids.. but the low water levels made just a small stream trickling in from what is usually a creek flowing to the waterfalls edge.

Perfect to jump into after this hot hot hike we thought..but what we did not expect was it's freezing temperature! I felt like a cartoon character who jumped in, to instantly defy gravitational laws by leaping back out onto the granite rocks just as fast! BRRRR! Sure was refreshing though.

I decided to carefully take a risky crawl up near the edge where the waterfall drops to it's enormous height.

What I had found was a conical pool a mere couple of feet from the actual edge. With another small shelf above that was dripping a trickle of the cold water into it.

I decided it was safe enough and large enough for one person to sit in — so I did.

The result was a perfect sized small pool up to my chest. Imagine the centuries of water churning this pool into shape, and here I am settled in it comfortably, with one of the most magnificent views of the mountains above the valley, from the extremely rare vantage point of the Yosemite Falls lip. I consider those moments there to be pure Satori. I imagined it could have been the Himalayas it was so transcendently rare and exotic.

I took those impressions with me for years following as a major highlight of my Yosemite going years. [and I had many more extraordinary experiences there, to be covered later]

Jamie was enjoying the view from some of the cliffs above not far.

We met back at the pool, where we met a deadhead who was backpacking the backcountry along that ridge. He was also at the Laguna Seca show and was describing the skeleton band for the video filming I had missed.

Hiking down the trail, our legs were rubber. That still didn't stop us from wandering the valley to watch the full Moon rise over the phantom shadowed cliffs. It was so stunning that it became hard to retire to our tents.

We stayed up quite late in that dramatic natural display. Walking the valley trails to Mirror Lake and back.

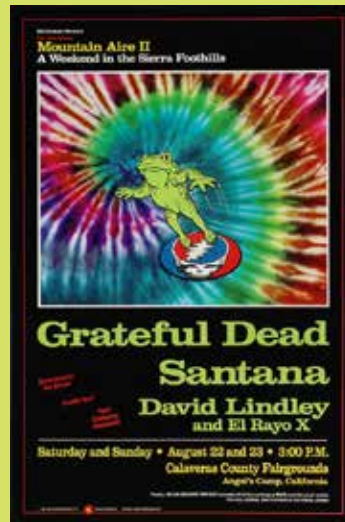
Truly memorable.

We camped at the walk in site near the foot of the Falls. [I looked it up online and it is now called Campground 4, but back then it had a name like 'Sunrise'] Our tents were near a large boulder. We were lucky to get it

during peak season. We camped near some Germans from Munich, who I spoke a bit with, giving tourist tips of the San Francisco area where they were going next.

Jamie and I were impressed with that trip...my parents dropped us off, on their way to meet friends in Tahoe. We had to take a Greyhound bus back, which was a slow haul of a long day.

Soon after the 2nd half of August, good friend Anthony arrives with Denise and their 2 year old son Issa. We had good plans to enjoy the bay area, then set out to the Sierras to camp and catch the Grateful Dead at Angels Camp! That was a great, hot weekend They rented a van, and off we went with a Moody Blues comp tape that Tony made.



The music and setting were fabulous, with a beautiful wide hillside facing the stage. Santana warmed up, and was fantastic. the GD played a fine set, with aerial parachutists showing off in the skies beyond while Phil sang 'Box of Rain'. Carlos joined the band for a few songs, then set 2 by dark, Scarlet> Fire was a scorching maelstrom, and the Morning Dew topped off that night superbly under the stars.

A very memorable show to end summertime!

The next morning, onwards to Yosemite! But being peak season, there were no campgrounds. But a nice ranger woman who sympathized with us having a tot onboard, directed us to "Goat Meadow" just outside of the south entrance. So we had to zoom down that way before dark, near Mariposa Grove.

We found it, and it was now dark, we had to set up a new tent they had brought, with headlights on so we could see. It was a comedy of errors for awhile there! We laughed but worked it out.

Enjoyed a brief breezethrough of the Yosemite sights, blown away by the big trees we camped near!

Back by the bay, I was getting ready for college! In San Francisco on an ideal sunny day, I went to the financial aid office and solidified my student loans and pell grants...and my Academy of Art era begins in a couple of days!

This felt good. What I wanted and needed was being generated, with good support from all around.

Afterwards, with Tony & family around for another day, we went to North Beach to enjoy the area. While we were enjoying the old psychedelic poster shop on Columbus Avenue, KFOG was on, with the dj announcing a new Pink Floyd song 'Learning To Fly'. Tony and I looked at each other in delighted, stunned amazement "Wow, what! new Floyd!!!" Totally stoked, we soaked in this new song all the way through right there in the shop full of black light posters.

I bought the album after my first day of class a few days later, which colored my autumn semester.

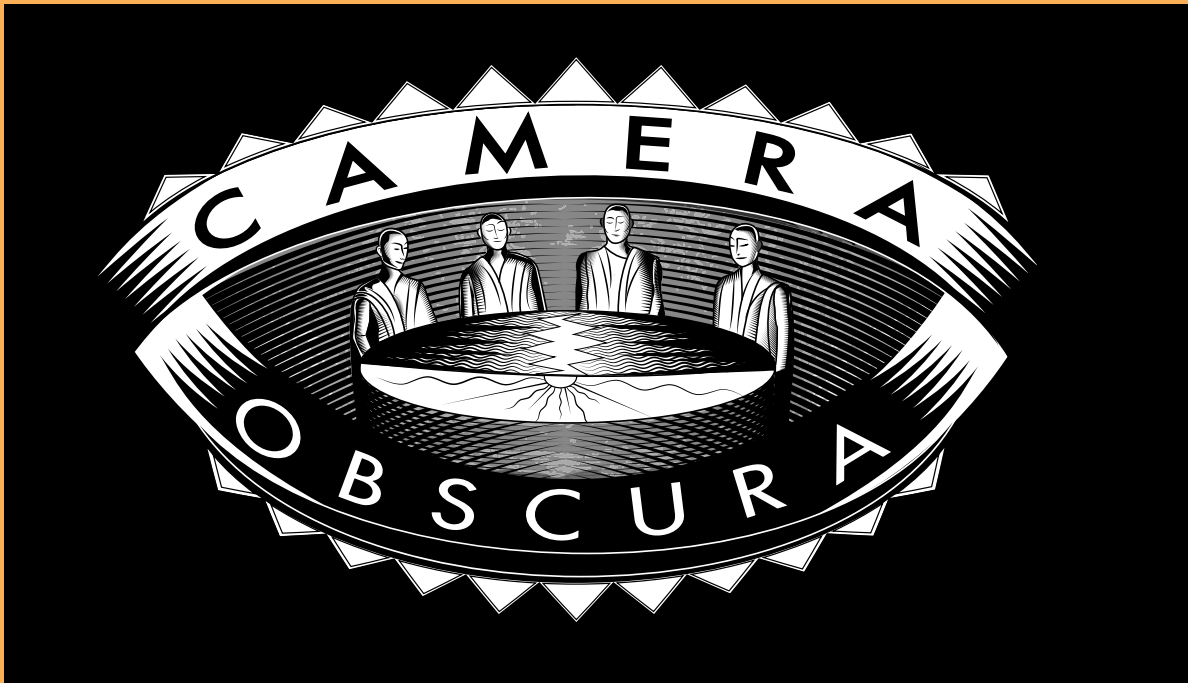
Concertwise, a huge epiphany inducing event was the surprise renewal of Pink Floyd on tour later in the year!

More on that later.

I believe it was that same day when we went to the Ocean to the Sutro baths area—a fantastic favourite area—and visited the Camera Obscura, which I knew that Tony would love, and I was correct.

Walking into the dark interior of the Camera, kindly let in for free by Dave Warren (recognizing me as a regular) who operated it at the time, to see the Oceanscape outside projected vividly on the parabolic screen. After some moments of adjusting in awe, in walk a group of Tibetan Buddhist monks in their burgundy and saffron robes, completely adding to the otherworldly experience as we all gazed at the scene before us. Anthony in particular was impressed, and who was to become a dedicated Dharma student in years to come.

In fact, that impression got me to illustrate the scene only a couple of years ago for Camera Obscura builder Chris DeMonterey, who was impressed by my account. I have added my creation—made in Adobe Illustrator—here on the following page.



And now.. art college! I began with the detailed and academic Anatomy with Thomas Marsh—which I dived deeply into. A classically trained artist, friendly and serious guy, and a dedicated teacher.

Larry Robinsons painting class, with Larry’s ability to get the shadow out of you and onto the canvas, replete with embracing the tough struggle. This was art from the craw and no paint by numbers class. Larry would rile your emotions out about the work, and reject the decorative. His way of pushing you forward. I learned a lot.

Jack Scotts drawing class was the opposite of Anatomy with Tom Marsh. Intellectual, conceptual, and experimental.

Figure Painting with Wade Hoefer was an evening class that proved perhaps the most valuable, thanks to Wade’s shared expertise. He was intimidating at first, but proved to be an incredible teacher who takes painting seriously.

For liberal arts, I took English lit with Will Tuttle, who became an instant life-long friend. His open minded and intuitive approach was refreshing to me, offputting to others. He’d play piano works for us to imagine and visualize to, and discuss and write about after. Perfect for artists, but some of the more conservative majors did not like this and wanted the conventional.

*“Change must be earned
Sacrificial bonfire must reign”*

Overall, I was starting an academic adventure in the arts, with bustling downtown San Francisco as my campus. Loved it!

My year was not that social, and was now changing. I met Jon Weiss that year, the excellent illustrative painter of vast imagination.

In anatomy class I instantly started to flirt with this ultra cute blonde from Wisconsin named Kelly. Dutch heritage, fun to go out with, and a doll. Unfortunately, she was not a natural artist, and also became religious later that year..in other words, annoying as hell.

That's really super, Supergirl

I should have given up on her sooner, but I did enjoy going out her for awhile to the Academy of Sciences, her fancy dorm building at USF, a few shows. I also enjoyed going out with several international students. The Aussie was particularly hot for me..but she smoked. darn! Same with the Russian; a black cat of a sexy woman who went after me, but I didn't let it last long as the cigs came out.

What is worse: religious women or smoking women? The latter were easily the most fun.

Ultimately, I was married to my schoolwork and my dedication got me on the Deans list soon.

I think my art output was crap though. Not sure if I have any art from that time that I deemed good enough to even save.

[in fact, I later burned my 1987 sketchbook for being so timid and pale]

Learning was strong though! and absorbing local culture.

An interesting find: My first month at the Academy, I found a unique flyer in the Fine Arts building hallway, for the San Francisco Cacophony Society. I was immediately intrigued by it's counter cultural fun weirdness. [see at the end of this essay] I was too shy to get to one of the events by myself that year, but fast forward to 1989 and I became a full fledged member!

October is electric in the bay area. And we had brother Grant around for several months! Mom painted a cartoon character in lederhosen, hung out front that read "*Willkommen Grant!*"

It was great to have him around! He and I formed a good bond on my stays with him in Germany, and now we have California!

The first thing we did was catch the Grateful Dead at the new venue Shoreline. The band played well after that hot day, and since the place was built on the grounds of an old dump, the that brought out the methane scent. Even the band made fun of this with a garbage heap lyric thrown into Minglewood Blues.

The full Moon overhead was inspiring and the show was on! Pumpkins carved and glad deadheads having a great time.

During break we talked to a mellow old hippie who said he worked for NASA, who had a container of pills he even offered us. No thanks! We referred to him later as the Old Took!

Great show and another memorable one for '87! [and I failed to mention Dylan & the Dead, Greeks, Kaiser and Oakland Coliseum Dead shows]

Grants student from Germany, Mokka, who was also my pen pal, came to visit while she was staying in San Diego.

It was fun to show her around SF, where we walked across and wore our feet out. a town I was knowing better all of the time.

I was in love with the wonderland that is San Francisco..from the exotic buzz of Chinatown, the dramatic ocean cliffs of Sutro Baths and its storied history, Golden Gate park, downtown and more. The nooks and crannies were becoming clear territory. I was starting to own my own version of San Francisco. And little did I know how rich of an involvement it would become in years ahead!

Becoming acquainted with more fellow students increased, especially the following year of 1988, when I felt I had "arrived" more than 1987. The semester was rich in development, trial and error.

As the year came to a close, seeing Pink Floyd on December 3rd was a sensational experience, Brian scored us 6 tickets with a good central view. Bri, Mitch, Jill, Grant, me and Kelly went. 'Shine on you crazy diamond' was spine tingling! the whole show had me amped for months afterwards. That made my winter.

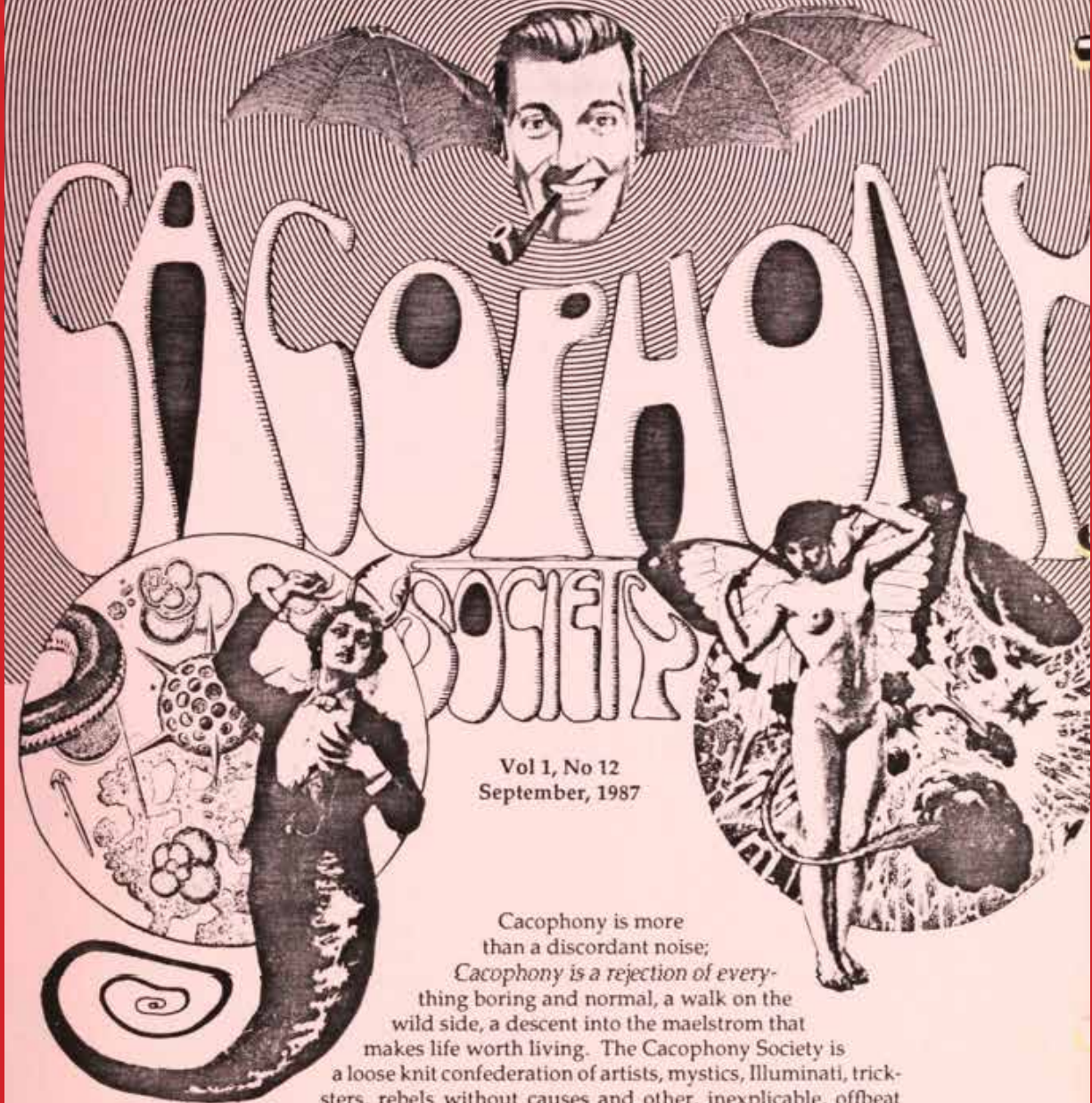
Other than that, seeing Roger Waters (by myself, also at Oakland coliseum) was a sensational Floydian experience! It was a season of Pink Floyd, while spring and summer were magically Grateful Dead centered with a good dose of Todd Rundgren.

Other albums I absorbed at the time were by one of my favourite Minnesota musicians : Steve Tibbetts '*Exploded View*', which is a fantastic instrumental album I bought at the Tower Records near Ghirardeli Square.

George Harrisons '*Cloud Nine*', which Kelly gave me. '*In the Dark*' by the Grateful Dead—even though the songs had been heard live for the past 5 years. The mentioned Pink Floyd '*A Momentary Lapse of Reason*', and of course '*Skylarking*' by XTC.

"So circling we'll orbit another year"

ROUGH DRAFT
Official Organ of the San Francisco



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Cacophony is more than a discordant noise; *Cacophony is a rejection of everything boring and normal, a walk on the wild side, a descent into the maelstrom that makes life worth living.* The Cacophony Society is a loose knit confederation of artists, mystics, Illuminati, tricksters, rebels without causes and other, inexplicable, offbeat sorts. Its purpose has never been defined, but seems to have something to do with exploring unknown mental terrain, or perhaps facilitating the having of adventures and creating of artworks that mainstream society would like to forbid, or maybe just having a good tyme and meeting interesting people. ROUGH DRAFT is our list of events and happenings open to all adventurous spirits; check it out.

Frankenstein's Workshop

Saturday, Sept. 5 8:00 p.m.

Meet: At the N.E. corner of Judah and 7th Ave.

Bring: Recently or about-to-be deceased animal bodies or parts (please no "roadkill")

Wear: Something you won't mind getting indelible stains on

Dr. X and The Other One

long enough! Join us for a festival of learning things Man Was Not Meant To Know and Opening Doors Man Was Not Meant To Open! Our freezer is stocked with experimental subjects from a nifty variety of species, we have all the equipment that you'll need (and any MD who tells you that you need anything fancier than a scalpel or X-acto, a needle and thread, and maybe a pint of gin and a reefer is conning you for a higher fee), and, as a Qualified